

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, EAID, HA
SUBJECT: ROUND TABLE SCORES DISCONTENT IN NORTHWEST

1. INDEPENDENT RADIO HAITI INTER GAVE REPEATED COVERAGE TO OTHERWISE LARGELY UNNOTICED JANUARY 4 ROUND TABLE AT FRENCH INSTITUTE IN WHICH FOUR COMMUNITY LEADERS FROM NORTHWEST CITY OF PORT-DE-PAIX COMPLAINED BITTERLY OF GOH INDIFFERENCE TOWARD "HAITI'S MOST NEEDY REGION." LEADERS ORGANIZED EVENT FOLLOWING A "PROPAGANDA TOUR OF THE NORTHWEST" BY GOH INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES WHO MAINTAINED THAT "UNDER JEAN-CLAUDISM ALL IS WELL AND THE SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS IS UNDERWAY."

2. DISCONTENT FOCUSED PRINCIPALLY ON GOH INACTION, LACK OF CONCERN FOR AND IGNORANCE OF EFFECTS OF 1977 DROUGHT, FAMINE, THE EXODUS OF PEASANTS TO THE BAHAMAS AND BEYOND, MARIJUANA CULTIVATION (AND IMPLICIT RISK OF LOCAL USE) AND THE GENERALLY BACKWARD CONDITIONS OF NORTHWEST. PARTICIPANTS SAID THAT DESPITE RECOGNITION THAT REGION IS WHERE ASSISTANCE MOST NEEDED, GOH HAS NO MAJOR AGRICULTURE, ROAD, DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION OR SOCIAL PROGRAMS IN THE NORTHWEST. AID AND HACHO (AID-ASSISTED HAITIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY HELP ORGANIZATION) DREW PRAISE FROM
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PANELISTS, HOWEVER, AS "ONLY ONES INTERESTED IN HELPING US."
PANELISTS CITED NOVEMBER VISIT OF AID ADMINISTRATOR GILLIGAN AND OTHERS TO ANSE ROUGE AND AID-SUPPORTED PROJECTS IN ANSE ROUGE AREA AS TANGIBLE EVIDENCE THAT FOREIGN INTEREST IN REGION EXCEEDS THAT OF GOH.

3. PANELISTS ALSO COMPLAINED OF LACK OF CONCERN AMONG MEDIA,

ONLY TWO OF WHICH, RADIO HAITI INTER AND WEEKLY LE PETIT SAMEDI SOIR, COVERED THE ROUND TABLE IN ANY DETAIL.

4. GOH RESPONDED TO PANEL BY DISPATCHING DEPUTY MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE TO PORT-DE-PAIX BUT HIS REASSURANCES UNLIKELY TO DISPEL FEELING THAT GOVERNMENT INCAPABLE OF ASSUAGING AREA'S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS.

5. COMMENT: THE FACT THAT PORT-DE-PAIX LEADERS FOUND IT NECESSARY TO TRAVEL TO PORT-AU-PRINCE AND USE FRENCH CULTURAL INSTITUTE AS FORUM TO PROTEST GOH INACTION AND BLUNT, BITTER LANGUAGE USED REVEAL A CONTINUING UNDERCURRENT OF DISSATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT INEPTITUDE. THE PAUCITY OF MEDIA COVERAGE IS EXPLAINED BY THE DECEMBER 13 "NEREE AFFAIR" AND SUBSEQUENT CAUTION OF PRESS IN TREATING ANY ISSUE SMACKING OF CRITICISM OF GOH.

JONES

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